

**VERMONT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Noble Hall Lounge, Vermont College and Union Institute**  
**College Street, Montpelier**  
**April 13, 2010**

*The State Board and Department of Education provide support and leadership  
in the transformation of the Vermont education system in order to give each learner the opportunity to  
succeed in the 21st century.*

**Approved MINUTES**

**Present: Board Members: Fayneese Miller, Chair; Ruth Stokes, Vice-chair; Robert Kelley;  
Brian Vachon; Kathy Larsen; Stephan Morse; Judy Livingston; John Hall**

**Present DOE: Commissioner Armando Vilaseca; Jill Remick; Riva Dumont; Carol King;  
Bill Talbott; Mark Oettinger; John Fischer; Tom Alderman; Gail Hall; Pat Fitzsimmons;  
Noel Bryant; Doug Webster**

**Others: Rick Hilton, Lyndon Institute; Lionel Tracy; Marc Tucker; David Osborne; John  
Poljacik; Andrew West**

The current month's meeting agenda and packet materials may be accessed electronically at:  
<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/board/schedule.html#packet>

**Preliminaries**

**Item A: Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance**

Fayneese Miller, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Item B: Roll Call and Introductions**

Chair, Board members, others introduced themselves.

**Item C: Announcements, Board Member Updates**

Chair, Board Members

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**Item H: Legislative and Budget Updates**

Armando Vilaseca, Bill Talbott, Mark Oettinger spoke to the Board. The sequel bill to Act 68, *Challenges for Change*, has been created. The Legislature did not accept the recommendations of the Design Team which met during the month of March. It is being proposed that, by July 15, the Vermont Department of Education come up with a cost reduction plan for every district and technical center with a \$23.2 million reduction from FY 2011. It would have to go to the districts by September 10 for comment. By December, the Legislature would then "urge" districts to meet those targets.

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#### **Item D: NCEE Board Examination Proposal**

Marc Tucker, National Center on Education & the Economy (NCEE), presented the Board with information on NCEE's Board Examination Systems. He explained the shortcomings of the American education system for high school and college students and the impacts on the workforce, especially in the global economy. Board exam systems include a sound core program of courses, thoughtfully designed syllabi, high-quality exams and quality teacher training matched to courses. Global research shows that board exam systems are key to the success of the world's best performing opportunities for all students.

Essentially the system identifies the key skills that students need to have to be successful in two-year institutions after their sophomore year. When those students pass the exam, they can enroll into a two-year post-secondary institution. Or they could stay in high school and take the upper division program, with either Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) or a career and technical program. If a student does not succeed, the high school will provide the student with a specific intervention to help the student succeed. The goal is to get every student in the position to choose whichever post-secondary aspiration they want. The current five highest rated systems are the ACT Quality Core program, Cambridge International Exams, College Board AP, Edexcel and International Baccalaureate.

Vermont would need to identify voluntary pilot schools, with volunteer teachers and volunteer students. A college-ready diploma would need to be awarded. The costs would be \$50 per student per exam, the teacher training would be \$400-800.

*Race to the Top* includes a national assessment system for which NCEE would apply. NCEE is also trying for the i3 grant under ARRA. Money saved when students leave school early should be reinvested at the high school for students who are struggling.

Board questions included the cost, the effect of dual enrollment, how to change the mindset of students, when teacher training would take place, comparison to other countries, high quality versus highly effective, and other challenges and concerns, noting that the tenets of this work fit with the Board's transformation work.

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#### **Item E: Public to be Heard**

Rick Hilton, Headmaster at Lyndon Institute (LI), spoke to the Board in support of the NCEE Board Examination System and explained LI's work with China for student teachers and tests. LI administers the ACT to all its students, including its incoming 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

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#### **Item F: Commissioner's Update**

Commissioner Vilaseca discussed the recent Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) conference including a focus on *Race to the Top*, National Common Core Standards, and the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and rural state issues.

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#### **Item G: Challenges for Change Design Team Update** (Armando Vilaseca, Stephan Morse)

*Challenges for Change* legislation instructed state agencies to save specific amounts of funds and gave the agencies three weeks to come up with recommendations. The legislative committees did not agree to the education recommendations and have proposed new legislation. The FY2011

challenge was met since school budgets came in level-funded and saved over \$20 million. Commissioner Vilaseca noted the decline in student enrollment and the increase in staff over the last 10 years. *Challenges for Change* also had goals for student outcomes. Now the proposed legislation asks the VTDOE to recommend reductions for each district. Commissioner Vilaseca warned that this method of non-strategic cuts will negatively impact students. He noted his support for H.782 which is a voluntary school district consolidation bill. Morse said the Board needs to be aggressive in encouraging consolidation as a means of providing a better education. The Board has a redistricting committee in place and can now move forward with that work. Commissioner Vilaseca is considering holding commissioner town meetings with voters because the message about better outcomes for students and what the redistricting would really look like is being distorted. The scale is still a Vermont scale.

Chair Miller asked for a group to draft a statement for the Board to sign onto that would show support for mandatory consolidation. There needs to be a clear, consistent message. Stokes brought up the school choice issue. Livingston noted there is no motivation for the general public to change. The Board agreed that the cost savings to be found should be emphasized, while still continuing to focus on the learner.

### Discussion Items

#### **Item J: Bethel and Rochester Town School Districts: Requests for Re-grouping ([16 V.S.A §261\(a\)](#); [SBE Rule 3200](#))**

Mark Oettinger, general counsel, was joined by John Poljacik (interim superintendent) and Andy West (curriculum coordinator). The towns of Bethel and Rochester both voted at their recent annual meetings to withdraw from the Windsor Northwest Supervisory Union. As required in statute, both districts are currently conducting a needs assessment and are in discussions with other districts and supervisory unions. They also have closed two schools recently. Rochester High School is also losing enough students to only have about 15 students per grade. They will present the needs assessments to the Board by August 2010.

### Action Items

#### **Item I: Consent Agenda**

Motion: Stephan Morse moved, seconded by John Hall, to approve the consent agenda, with comment.

#### **1. Minutes of March 16, 2010 SBE Meeting**

#### **2. Capital Construction (Cathy Hilgendorf)**

| <u>Project #</u> | <u>Town School District</u>                   | <u>Amount</u> |
|------------------|---|---------------|
| C-521            | Waits River Valley Union School District # 36 | \$300,000     |

The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

The Board recessed for lunch.

The meeting resumed at 1:04 p.m.

**Item H: Legislative and Budget Updates (continued)**

General Counsel Mark Oettinger spoke to the Board. Senate Bill 297 is the miscellaneous education bill, addresses expansion of distance learning, post-secondary opportunities, designation of out-of-state schools, school food programs and longitudinal data systems. He also discussed H.792, which is the new bill number for implementing *Challenges for Change*, and H.782, which is the current voluntary consolidation bill.

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**Item K: National Common Core Standards – Update; Blueprint for Reauthorization of ESEA - Update**

Commissioner Vilaseca and Deputy Commissioner Rae Ann Knopf explained the National Common Core mission. For the most part, the proposed standards are aligned with Vermont's standards. All New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) states are participating. Smarter Balance is the name of the six consortia that have combined into two. Linda Darling-Hammond is leading the Smarter Balance consortium. The Race to the Top Assessment Request for Proposal was released last week.

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**Item L: Race to the Top (RttT) Application – Update (Armando Vilaseca, Rae Ann Knopf)**

Deputy Commissioner Knopf explained more about the competitive nature of RttT and Vermont's chances. In addition, the winning states had strong support from teacher unions and state stakeholders. This morning the Vermont Department of Education sent out a survey to school board chairs, superintendents and local association presidents to gauge their support.

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**Item M: Work Session: *Opportunities to Learn* Report (continued from March)**

- Discussion: statement on status of *Opportunity to Learn* report
- Discussion: statement on support for the National Common Core Standards Initiative
- Draft statement on support for personal learning plans

Section III – Prek-16 partnership – this is in place outside of the Board through legislation (H.709)

Section IV – Educator Quality

Brian Vachon drafted a statement about the personal learning plans which the Board reviewed. This will be taken and voted on at the Strategic Planning session in June. It is expected to be a part of a larger unified document.

The Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators (VSBPE) sent the Board a letter regarding *Opportunities to Learn*. Chair Miller noted that Section IV is not consistent with the VSBPE. Miller, Knopf and Vilaseca plan to attend the next VSBPE meeting.

The redistricting commission is now going to be charged with what the Board voted on at the February meeting.

Morse proposed the following language: To announce the commission, include the February statement, and add that the Board expressed support for the philosophical approach of the commissioner in his *Challenges for Change* recommendations. The statement must include addressing the current school choice options.

Stokes' suggestion - address bullet number one: to preserve existing school choice and expand choice and learning opportunities for all learners.

Carol King will send the statement to the Board for review and have feedback by Thursday. The announcement would include the names of people who will serve on the Board's redistricting commission.

**Concluding and Adjournment**

**Item N: Future Agendas, Wrap Up and Adjourn** (Board members, Armando Vilaseca, Carol King)

The next Board meeting will be in Woodstock at State Board member Alex Melville's school.

Motion: Stephan Morse moved, seconded by John Hall, to adjourn the April 10, 2010 meeting of the State Board of Education. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

**Item O: Written Documents Attached**

1) 3-16-2010 SBE Summary

Minutes recorded by Jill Remick  
Minutes prepared by Carol King